

## Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/GRK:GTCHURCHILL:JFC

20930 7/28/73

APPROVED BY NEA - MR. SISCO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 149091

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, U.S.

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR SOROKOS' DEMARCHE ON NOSSITER ARTICLE

REF: ATHENS 5245

1. UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, AMBASSADOR SOROKOS CALLED ON ASST. SECY. SISCO EVENING JULY 28 TO DISCUSS NOSSITER ARTICLE IN WASHINGTON POST. SOROKOS SAID HE HAD FULL REPORT OF TASCA-CAVALIERATOS DISCUSSION AND WORDING OF EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE. EMBASSY'S STATEMENT WOULD ORDINARILY BE CONSIDERED SATISFACTORY BUT UNDER PRESENT SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES HIS GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THE FOLLOWING THREE ALLEGATIONS IN THE ARTICLE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED; A) TASCA HAS SENT UNFAVORABLE REPORTS ON THE GREEK GOVERNMENT TO WASHINGTON; B) TASCA EXPRESSED TO PAPADOPOULOS HIS DOUBTS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF THE PLEBESCITE; AND C) TASCA HAS CONGRATULATED KANNELLOPOULOS ON HIS STATEMENT CRITICIZING THE PLEBESCITE. HIS GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS THE REASONS FOR THE BROAD APPROACH TAKEN IN EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE, BUT THINKS THAT AMBASSADOR TASCA IS IN A VERY DELICATE POSITION AND IS UNCOVERED IF NOTHING IS ADDED TO THAT GENERAL STATEMENT. THEREFORE, HE REQUESTS THAT WE ISSUE A FURTHER STATEMENT HERE OR IN ATHENS TO COVER THESE THREE POINTS.

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2. MR. SISCO ASKED SOROKOS TO CLARIFY HIS REFERENCE TO

AMBASSADOR TASCA BEING IN A DELICATE POSITION AND UNCOVERED. SOROKOS SAID THAT IF WE LEAVE THE MATTER AT THE PRESENT STAGE, AMBASSADOR TASCA REMAINS UNCOVERED WITH RESPECT TO THOSE POINTS IN THE NOSSITER ARTICLE, AND SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE TO REMEDY THIS SITUATION.

3. IN LOW KEY RESPONSE, SISCO SAID THAT AS REGARDS THE FIRST POINT, WE HAVE ALREADY SAID PUBLICLY, AS REPORTED IN THE ARTICLE, THAT TASCA HAS BEEN A VERY OBJECTIVE REPORTER SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN ATHENS. ON THE SECOND POINT, THE GREEK GOVERNMENT KNOWS THE FACTS. AMBASSADOR TASCA COMMUNICATED A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY TO PAPADOPOULOS IN WHICH HE REITERATED OUR TWO-PRONG POLICY AND UNDERScoreD THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THE UPCOMING PLEBESCITE PROVIDING A REAL CHOICE. ON THIRD POINT, AMBASSADOR TASCA HAS CONFIRMED THERE HAS BEEN NO CONTACT WITH KANELLOPOULOS. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY PUBLIC COMMENTS ABOUT AMBASSADOR TASCA AND THE GREEK SITUATION, SOME OF WHICH, FOR EXAMPLE THE RECENT NEWSWEEK ARTICLE AND A DISCUSSION IN THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS, CRITICIZED TASCA FOR BEING TOO CLOSE TO THE GREEK REGIME. SISCO SAID HE WOULD TAKE SOROKOS' REQUEST UNDER ADVISEMENT AND WOULD DISCUSS IT WITH THE SECRETARY ON MONDAY MORNING.

4. WHEN SOROKOS EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT SOMETHING COULD BE DONE ON SUNDAY, SISCO RAISED QUESTION WHETHER IT WAS ADVISABLE TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE DAY OF THE PLEBESCITE. SISCO WENT ON TO SAY THAT ASIDE FROM THE QUESTION OF TIMING WE SHOULD WEIGH THE DESIRABILITY FROM OUR STANDPOINT AS WELL AS THAT OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT OF GETTING INTO A POINT-BY-POINT DISCUSSION ON THIS PARTICULAR NEWS ARTICLE. OUR PRESS SPOKESMAN IS ASKED TO COMMENT ON HUNDREDS OF PRESS ARTICLE BUT WE PURPOSELY AVOID GETTING INTO DETAILS AND PARTICULARLY INTO SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON GREEK INTERNAL POLITICS. WE SHOULD ASK WHETHER IT IS IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST TO SET THIS KIND OF PRECEDENT WITH THIS ARTICLE. MR. SISCO HAD THOUGHT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD BE QUITE HAPPY WITH THE EMBASSY'S PRESS RELEASE SINCE IT REAFFIRMS OUR POLICY. THE SECRETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE REFERRED TO IN THE RELEASE IS A CONFIDENTIAL

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VERY STRONG STATEMENT ON OUR POLICY OF NON-INTERVENTION.

5. SOROKOS AGREED THAT THE TIMING OF ANY ADDITIONAL STATEMENT WAS PROBLEMATIC. IN HIS VIEW, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF ALL POINTS HAD BEEN COVERED IN THE EMBASSY'S FIRST RELEASE. MR. SISCO COMMENTED THAT SUNDAY WAS IN ANY CASE A BAD DAY TO GET SOMETHING IN THE PRESS HERE. HE HOPED SOROKOS WOULD ASK HIS GOVERNMENT TO LOOK AT THE

SITUATION FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE ISSUES HE HAD DESCRIBED. HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING THE MATTER WITH THE SECRETARY ON MONDAY TO SEE WHAT COURSE WOULD BE IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST.

6. COMMENT: SOROKOS DID NOT PRESS VERY HARD FOR A SUNDAY STATEMENT AND SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE KIND OF REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC POINTS HIS GOVERNMENT WAS REQUESTING CARRIED WITH IT THE RISK OF OUR GETTING INTO THE BUSINESS OF COMMENTING ON GREEK INTERNAL AFFAIRS. ROGERS

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O,MR. NEWLIN.

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